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TAGS: [CASC](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [MX](#)
SUBJECT: Travel Alert

¶1. This Travel Alert updates security information for U.S. citizens traveling and living in Mexico. It replaces the Travel Alert for Mexico dated April 14, 2008, and expires on April 14, 2009.

¶2. While millions of U.S. Citizens safely visit Mexico each year, including thousands who cross the land border every day for study, tourism or business, increased levels of violence make it imperative that travelers understand the risks of travel to Mexico, how best to avoid dangerous situations, and whom to contact if one is a victim of crime. Common-sense precautions, such as visiting only legitimate business and tourist areas, avoiding areas where prostitution and drug dealing might occur, and exercising prudence in where one visits during the evening hours and at night, can help ensure that travel to Mexico is safe and enjoyable.

Violence Along the U.S. - Mexico Border

¶3. Mexican drug cartels are engaged in an increasingly violent fight for control of narcotics trafficking routes along the U.S. - Mexico border in an apparent response to the Government of Mexico's initiatives to crack down on narco-trafficking organizations. In order to combat violence, the government of Mexico has deployed military troops in various parts of the country. U.S. citizens should cooperate fully with official checkpoints when traveling on Mexican highways.

¶4. Some recent Mexican army and police confrontations with drug cartels have taken on the characteristics of small-unit combat, with cartels employing automatic weapons and, on occasion, grenades. Firefights have taken place in many towns and cities across Mexico but particularly in northern Mexico, including Tijuana, Chihuahua City and Ciudad Juarez. The situation in northern Mexico remains fluid; the location and timing of future armed engagements cannot be predicted.

¶5. A number of areas along the border are experiencing rapid growth in the rates of many types of crime. More than 1,600 cars were reportedly stolen in Ciudad Juarez in the month of July 2008, and bank robberies there are up dramatically. Rates for robberies, homicides, petty thefts, and carjackings have all increased over the last year across Mexico generally, with notable spikes in Tijuana and northern Baja California. Ciudad Juarez, Tijuana, and Nogales are among the cities which have recently experienced public shootouts during daylight hours in shopping centers and other public venues. Criminals have followed and harassed U.S. citizens traveling in their vehicles in border areas including Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros, Tijuana, and along Route 15 between Nogales and Hermosillo.

¶6. The situation in Ciudad Juarez is of special concern. Mexican authorities report that more than 1,000 people have been killed there this year. U.S. citizens should pay close attention to their surroundings while traveling in Ciudad Juarez, avoid isolated locations during late night and early morning hours, and remain alert to news reports. A recent series of muggings near the U.S. Consulate General in Ciudad Juarez has targeted applicants for U.S. visas. Visa and other service seekers visiting the Consulate are encouraged to make provisions to pay for those services with something other than cash.

¶7. U.S. citizens are urged to be alert to safety and security concerns when visiting the border region.

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Criminals are armed with a wide array of sophisticated weapons. In some cases, assailants have worn full or

partial police or military uniforms and have used vehicles that resemble police vehicles. While most of the crime victims are Mexican citizens, the uncertain security situation poses risks for U.S. citizens as well.

¶8. U.S. citizen victims of crime in Mexico are urged to contact the consular section of the nearest U.S. consulate or Embassy for advice and assistance. Contact information is provided at the end of this message.

Crime and Violence Throughout Mexico

¶8. While the largest increase in violence has occurred near the U.S. border, U.S. citizens traveling elsewhere in Mexico should also exercise caution in unfamiliar areas and be aware of their surroundings at all times. Mexican and foreign bystanders have been injured or killed in some violent attacks, demonstrating the heightened risk in public places. In recent years, dozens of U.S. citizens have been kidnapped across Mexico and many cases remain unresolved. U.S. citizens who believe they are being targeted for kidnapping or other crimes should notify Mexican officials and the nearest American consulate or the Embassy as soon as possible. U.S. citizens should make every attempt to travel on main roads during daylight hours, particularly the toll ("cuota") roads, which are generally more secure. U.S. citizens are encouraged to stay in well-known tourist destinations and tourist areas of the cities with more adequate security, and provide an itinerary to a friend or family member not traveling with them. U.S. citizens should avoid traveling alone, and should carry a GSM-enabled cell phone that functions internationally. Refrain from displaying expensive-looking jewelry, large amounts of money, or other valuable items.

Demonstrations and Large Public Gatherings

¶9. Demonstrations occur frequently throughout Mexico and usually are peaceful. However, even demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and escalate to violence unexpectedly. People have died during violent demonstrations, including an American citizen who was killed in Oaxaca in 2006. During demonstrations or law enforcement operations, U.S. citizens are advised to remain in their homes or hotels, avoid large crowds, and avoid the downtown and surrounding areas. Since the timing and routes of scheduled marches and demonstrations are always subject to change, U.S. citizens should monitor local media sources for new developments and exercise extreme caution while within the vicinity of protests. The Mexican Constitution prohibits political activities by foreigners, and such actions may result in detention and/or deportation. Therefore, U.S. citizens are advised to avoid participating in demonstrations or other activities that might be deemed political by Mexican authorities. In a recent incident, a Mexican Independence Day celebration was the target of a violent attack. As is always the case in any large gathering, U.S. citizens should remain alert to their surroundings.

Further Information

¶10. For more detailed information on staying safe in Mexico, please see the Mexico Country Specific Information at:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_970.html
. Information on security and travel to popular tourist destinations is also provided in the publication: "Spring Break in Mexico- Know Before You Go!!" at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/spring_break_mexico/spring_break_mexico_2812.html

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[ico/spring_break_mexico_2812.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/spring_break_mexico_2812.html) . For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's internet web site at <http://travel.state.gov> where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, and Travel Alerts can be found. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States, or, for callers from Mexico, a regular toll line at 001-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). American citizens traveling or residing overseas are encouraged to register with the appropriate U.S. Embassy or Consulate on the State Department's travel registration website at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/>

¶11. For any emergencies involving U.S. citizens in Mexico, please contact the closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. The U.S. Embassy is located in Mexico City at Paseo de la Reforma 305, Colonia Cuauhtemoc, telephone from the United States: 011-52-55-5080-2000; telephone within Mexico City: 5080-2000; telephone long distance within Mexico 01-55-5080-2000. You may also contact the Embassy by e-mail at: ccs@usembassy.net.mx. The Embassy's internet address is <http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/> .

¶12. Consulates:

Ciudad Juarez: Avenida Lopez Mateos 924-n, telephone (52)(656) 611-3000.

Guadalajara: Progreso 175, telephone (52)(333) 268-2100.

Hermosillo: Avenida Monterrey 141, telephone (52)(662) 289-3500.

Matamoros: Avenida Primera 2002, telephone (52)(868) 812-14402.

Merida: Calle 60 no. 338 k, telephone (52)(999) 942-5700

Monterrey: Avenida Constitucion 411 Poniente, telephone (52)(818) 345-2120.

Nogales: Calle San Jose, Nogales, Sonora, telephone (52)(631) 311-8150.

Nuevo Laredo: Calle Allende 3330, col. Jardin, telephone (52)(867) 714-0512.

Tijuana: Tapachula 96, telephone (52)(664) 622-7400.

114. Consular Agencies:

Acapulco: Hotel Continental Emporio, Costera Miguel Aleman 121 - local 14, telephone (52)(744) 484-0300 or (52)(744) 469-0556.

Cabo San Lucas: Blvd. Marina local c-4, Plaza Nautica, col. Centro, telephone (52)(624) 143-3566.

Cancun: Plaza Caracol two, second level, no. 320-323, Boulevard Kukulkan, km. 8.5, Zona Hotelera, telephone (52)(998) 883-0272.

Ciudad Acuña: Ocampo # 305, col. Centro, telephone (52)(877) 772-8661

Cozumel: Plaza Villa Mar en el Centro, Plaza Principal, (Parque Juarez between Melgar and 5th ave.) 2nd floor, locales #8 and 9, telephone (52)(987) 872-4574.

Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo: Hotel Fontan, Blvd. Ixtapa, telephone (52)(755) 553-2100.

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Mazatlan: Hotel Playa Mazatlan, Playa Gaviotas #202, Zona Dorada, telephone (52)(669) 916-5889.

Oaxaca: Macedonio Alcala no. 407, interior 20, telephone (52)(951) 514-3054 (52)(951) 516-2853.

Piedras Negras: Abasolo #211, Zona Centro, Piedras Negras, Coah., Tel. (878) 782-5586.

Playa del Carmen: "The Palapa," Calle 1 Sur, between Avenida 15 and Avenida 20, telephone (52)(984) 873-0303.

Puerto Vallarta: Paradise Plaza, Paseo de los Cocoteros #1, Local #4, Interior #17, Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, telephone (52)(322) 222-0069.

Reynosa: Calle Monterrey #390, Esq. Sinaloa, Colonia Rodriguez, telephone: (52)(899) 923 - 9331

San Luis Potosi: Edificio "Las Terrazas", Avenida Venustiano Carranza 2076-41, Col. Polanco, telephone: (52)(444) 811-7802/7803.

San Miguel de Allende: Dr. Hernandez Macias #72, telephone (52)(415) 152-2357 or (52)(415) 152-0068.

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